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Chairman: Mr. Busacca ..... (Italy)

Contents

Agenda item 103: Crime prevention and criminal justice*

Agenda item 104: International drug control*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 103: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/52/3, 295, 327, 357, 413 and A/52/447-S/1997/775; A/C.3/52/L.4, L.5, L.6, L.7 and L.8)

Agenda item 104: International drug control (A/52/3, 127, 296, 336, 413 and A/52/447-S/1997/775; E/1997/48)

1. **Mr. Arlacchi** (Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention), introducing the two agenda items, said that the two pillars of the newly established Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention were the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Centre for International Crime Prevention (formerly the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division). One of his goals since taking office was to put into practice the reform proposal to make the United Nations Office at Vienna the driving force to combat drug trafficking, organized crime and international terrorism. The establishment of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention to exploit the synergies of UNDCP and the new Centre was a move to provide strong leadership. UNDCP and the Centre would continue to keep their separate identities and his Office would fully respect the designation of resources made available through voluntary contributions.

2. Referring to item 104, he said that UNDCP had been more successful at drug control than at communicating its successes. Opium production in Pakistan and Thailand had dropped dramatically in the past 20 years, and although, 25 years earlier, large-scale illicit opium cultivation had occurred in as many as seven countries across Asia, it was currently concentrated mainly in Afghanistan and Myanmar. UNDCP had played a catalytic role but the strong political commitment of Governments such as Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Thailand and the Lao People' Democratic Republic had guaranteed its success.

3. UNDCP strategy centred on the basic principle of a balanced approach between demand and supply reduction. UNDCP would continue to assist Governments in applying the international drug-control treaties, particularly the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. However, it remained the responsibility of Member States to make the conventions effective tools for countering the drug menace by putting their provisions into practice. UNDCP and the Centre for International Crime Prevention would lend their expertise, expand their technical assistance and guide the world community in combating money-laundering and in overcoming obstacles to cooperation, including bank secrecy and the increased role of off-shore centres in providing secure havens for illicit profits.

4. One of his priorities was to strengthen the role of UNDCP as the international expert point of reference in drug-control matters. The Programme's ability to forecast trends would enable it to present policy recommendations on drug-control issues to Member States, as was demonstrated by its pioneering role in drawing attention to the problems posed by amphetamine-type stimulants.

5. He would continue to move UNDCP towards larger, integrated programmes to address the key issues in a comprehensive manner. It had reduced the number of individual projects by nearly half and would continue to reduce them. The coordinating mechanism built into each programme should facilitate coordination between UNDCP and other players. He counted on his colleagues in the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure the continued support of their organizations for international drug control. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had also expressed interest in cooperating with the Programme in countering money-laundering. Another important goal would be the promotion of regional cooperation. The global network of memoranda of understanding needed to be turned into frameworks for regional cooperation.

6. He had initiated an in-depth analysis of alternative development as part of a global feasibility study for supply reduction. The findings of the study would serve to guide the Programme's global strategy aimed at eliminating illicit cultivation of the cocoa bush and the opium poppy worldwide. The undertaking would combine alternative-development programmes and law-enforcement action.

7. A landmark event for UNDCP and the international community would be the 1998 special session of the General Assembly on international drug control. The UNDCP should be provided with both the financial and human resources required to initiate new activities that the General Assembly might call on it to undertake. The General Assembly should adopt a declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction to complement the drug-control treaties, which had been mostly concerned with the suppression of the illicit traffic.

8. In order to optimize the use of the Programme's limited resources and to enable it to develop into a flexible, lean organization, he was proposing the decentralization of responsibility and authority over each of the seven regional programmes to the country and regional offices. The measure would be accompanied by a redeployment of human

resources from headquarters in order to strengthen its expert capacity in the field. Headquarters would maintain overall policy control and managerial oversight.

9. The support and involvement of civil society, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations was of paramount importance in countering the drug problem. UNDCP had developed a strategy to better communicate its mission to the widest possible representation of society. The budget provided for the establishment of advocacy groups, composed of renowned experts from the private and public sector in a number of selected countries to that end.

10. The Programme relied on voluntary contributions for over 90 per cent of its total budget and eight Governments accounted for 84 per cent of contributions in 1997; those figures illustrated its vulnerability. The declining general-purpose contributions and increased earmarking by donors had a tendency to cripple the flexibility of the Programme. He urged the Assembly to help in broadening the resource base of the Programme.

11. Turning to item 105, he said that the first challenge facing the new United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention was that during the past decade each meeting of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, each session of the General Assembly and each Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had contributed new mandates and additional requests. The second challenge was that while mandates had grown exponentially, available resources had remained limited.

12. The work programme of the Centre had to be based on pursuing specific, achievable objectives within given time-frames. Without neglecting the other important mandates, emphasis would be given to international organized crime. As a first step, a global study on the trafficking of human beings, particularly the human-rights and criminal aspects, would be initiated. That would involve the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Labour Organization.

13. The use of United Nations internal resources had to be optimized. Accordingly, the United Nations network of criminal justice institutes had been invited to reorient their activities to better support the work of the Centre. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute would refocus on its original mandate to serve as the Centre's research instrument.

14. The Centre needed additional resources to meet new requests. In 1994, for instance, the General Assembly had endorsed the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime without providing additional resources.

15. The strategy of the new Centre should not be seen as neglecting past accomplishments. The Centre was inheriting a foundation on which to continue building, including its research capacity, its technical assistance to domestic criminal-justice systems and a strong tradition for setting United Nations norms and guidelines in criminal justice through the development of model laws and treaties. Another important asset was the active role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

16. **Mr. Fulci** (Italy) said that he wished to honour the presence on the podium of the new Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. The fight against drugs and drug trafficking had long been a top priority of the Italian Government. It had been encouraging to hear, in the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly, so many heads of State and Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs express their determination to oppose the phenomenon. The best contribution that Italy had made to the fight against drugs and organized crime was lending the talent and experience of Mr. Arlacchi, a leading expert in that field.

17. **Mr. Arda** (Turkey) said he wondered what position the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention took regarding the widespread belief that certain drugs should be legalized, and also how the fight against terrorism would be incorporated in the work of the Office.

18. **Mr. Otuyelu** (Nigeria) welcomed the intention of the Executive Director to combat international crime without indulging in finger-pointing, but with determination to do what was right.

19. In his delegation's opinion, insufficient funding was the greatest obstacle; there were limits to what could be done within existing resources, especially when additional mandates were added to those already in place. From the standpoint of the developing countries, technical assistance should be given priority.

20. It was appropriate to look for new resources, but caution should be exercised regarding any role for the private sector. It was also important that all Member States should be assured that the programmes in question belonged to the international community as a whole and not only to the major donor States; there was a tendency for the latter to dictate what should be done.

21. **Ms. Mesdoua** (Algeria) agreed with the representative of Turkey that more information should be given regarding measures to combat terrorism.

22. **Mr. Sucharipa** (Austria) said he wondered what initiatives were being taken to broaden the donor base, and what were the effects of the new institutional set-up within the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

23. **Ms. Morgan Sotomayor** (Mexico) requested more information regarding the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on international drug control.

24. **Mr. Arlacchi** (Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention), in response, said that the issue of terrorism was currently being addressed in several different forums within the United Nations system. However, the narrow resource base for crime-prevention purposes was the main problem; there were few staff and very little funding, and a significant expansion of the activities of the Centre would be possible with significantly increased resources. In the meantime, it was necessary to concentrate on what could realistically be done with the available resources, such as studying the implementation of existing international agreements on terrorism; very few of their provisions had so far been translated into action.

25. As to the issue of the legalization of drugs, the mandate given to the Office by the international community was very clear; the international conventions currently in force were based on the idea that the production, distribution and consumption of drugs must be controlled or prohibited. No State had repudiated its commitment to those conventions. The legalization debate resulted from an ill-informed and pessimistic view among the general public, and even among decision makers, of the results that had been achieved in the fight against drugs. Unfortunately, those who held that view remained largely unaware of many major successes, which had been achieved each time a State decided to treat the drug problem as a real priority and to invest resources in overcoming it. Efforts were under way to respond appropriately to the lack of public information.

26. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly were going well; its agenda was already taking shape; important proposals would be put forward regarding the issues of alternative development, money-laundering and tax havens, and precursors.

27. **Mr. Khelil** (Tunisia), speaking as Chairman of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, presented the Commission's report on its sixth session, held in Vienna from 28 April to 9 May 1997 (E/1997/30). The discussions of the Commission had focused on issues of priority concern to Member States, such as enhancing the rule of law and fighting corruption, development of the criminal justice system, implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security, regulation of firearms, promotion of international cooperation against transnational crime, extradition, cooperation in criminal matters, the smuggling of illegal migrants, illicit trafficking in motor vehicles and the role of criminal law in the protection of the environment. The Commission had also given attention to the questions of violence against women and illicit traffic in children.

28. He commended the Commission's efforts to establish effective rules for the strategic management of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, relying not only on the views of its members but also on the active role of its Bureau. The Bureau had recommended simplification of the Commission's agenda, including reduction of the number of resolutions and limitation of requests for more reports. He had set up a working group to undertake a review of the mandates and resources of the Programme with a view to establishing a more realistic relationship between the two, focusing on the expectations of Member States concerning the implementation of existing mandates. The Commission had paid special attention to the question of the mobilization of resources.

29. The Commission had recommended several resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. At its previous session, the Council had adopted resolutions reflecting important developments which should contribute to the achievement of greater progress in criminal justice and in combating crime. In the field of juvenile justice, the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System had been adopted, for use in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the context of juvenile justice. The other resolutions reflected the concern of the Commission and the Council to achieve progress in implementing United Nations standards and norms in the field of criminal justice, particularly with regard to the victims of crime and abuse of power, international cooperation for the improvement of prison conditions and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security and its widest possible dissemination. The draft resolutions currently before the General Assembly for adoption were extremely important, as they lay the foundations for the future work of the Commission and of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. The draft resolution concerning follow-up to the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime reflected the determination of States to implement the Declaration and Action Plan.

30. Most of the participants in the sixth session of the Commission had expressed their support for the elaboration of an international convention against organized transnational crime. Some had been of the view that the convention could constitute the basis for achieving harmony between national legislations against organized transnational crime, thus eliminating legal loopholes and safe havens exploited by organized criminal groups. Several participants had also been of the view that the convention should not be a mere declaration of principles but should contain practical measures to be implemented. The Government of Poland had offered to host an intergovernmental expert group meeting in January 1998 to elaborate a preliminary draft convention.

31. The holding in the year 2000 of the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders would represent further progress in crime prevention and criminal justice. The draft resolution on preparations for the Congress (A/C.3/52/L.5) reflected the topics to be included in its agenda and discussed in workshops. The Commission had accepted South Africa's offer to host the Congress.

32. With regard to violence against women, the Commission had elaborated the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, annexed to draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.6. The draft resolution urged States to be guided by them in developing strategies and measures to eliminate violence against women and in promoting women's equality within the criminal justice system.

33. The draft resolution on international cooperation against corruption and bribery in international commercial transactions (A/C.3/52/L.7) reflected the Commission's efforts to ensure a proper follow-up to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on that subject and the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials. The crisis in values as a result of corruption had a great impact on institutions and societies and required close international cooperation.

34. The draft resolution on international cooperation in criminal matters (A/C.3/52/L.8) focused on the further review and revision of arrangements governing such cooperation, particularly in mutual assistance and extradition.

35. The Commission's recommendations to the General Assembly required joint efforts at all levels to put policies into effect. That could be achieved only if the required resources were provided to implement a technical assistance programme for developing countries, countries with economies in transition and countries emerging from conflicts. He was confident that intensified cooperation among States and the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme constituted the necessary basis for helping the international community contain the phenomenon of crime. He hoped that the Commission would receive the full support of the General Assembly so that its work could proceed in the most appropriate manner.

36. **Ms. Kirsch** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia associated themselves with her statement.

37. The European Union was greatly concerned by the destabilizing effects of the drug scourge on society, and reiterated its commitment to combating that phenomenon at every stage. The development of synthetic drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors was particularly serious. In order to combat drugs effectively, it was vital not only to implement repressive measures, but also to take measures in the field of preventive education, public health and demand reduction by attacking the social factors at the root of drug addiction.

38. Combating money-laundering must remain a key element in the wider strategies in the fight against drugs and crime. The European Union believed that the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force constituted the main international initiative on money-laundering. In addition, more frequent use should be made of article 7 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which established a legal-assistance framework for combating money-laundering.

39. The Union had endorsed an early-warning system for new synthetic drugs, accompanied by a mechanism to evaluate the risks that they posed. The setting up of that system was a step towards controlling new synthetic substances. In accordance with the Global Action Plan, the fight against drugs was an integral part of the European Union's development cooperation policy. It was continuing to expand its cooperation with the associated countries and the Russian Federation in the fight against drugs. Under the programmes organized by UNDCP, the European Union was also participating in the action plan for the Caribbean and in the regional programmes in South-East Asia and south-eastern Europe. The Union was particularly concerned about the resumption of illicit opium and heroin trafficking in Afghanistan and Myanmar, and therefore called upon the Taliban and other parties in Afghanistan as well as the

authorities in Myanmar to put a stop to opium cultivation and drug trafficking.

40. The European Union welcomed the General Assembly's decision to convene a special session in 1998 on the question of narcotic drugs. The special session should result, *inter alia*, in a reaffirmation of Governments' political commitment to international drug control and to a declaration of principle on reducing demand. Particular emphasis should be placed on combating drug abuse among young people. The elimination of illicit crops used to manufacture narcotic drugs constituted an important aspect of the fight against drugs. International cooperation should be stepped up in that area in order to implement integrated development programmes to foster viable options for economic development. She stressed the importance of active participation in the preparations for, and the meetings of, the special session of the General Assembly by Member States and the other parties concerned, particularly non-governmental organizations, civil society and United Nations bodies.

41. The Union had stepped up its efforts to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime and underscored the importance of international cooperation in those areas. The stability of Governments and civil society was under increasing threat from transnational networks involved in crime, drugs, money-laundering and terrorism. Convinced of the need for international cooperation against organized transnational crime, the European Union participated actively in the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

42. All measures to combat crime and terrorism must fully respect human rights. In that connection, she welcomed the cooperation between the Division for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It was important to maintain a balance among the different activities of UNDCP and to broaden the base of donor countries funding the Programme in order to solve its financial problems.

43. She stressed that only concerted action, supported by determination to step up regional and international cooperation, could reverse the trend in drugs and crime. The European Union would continue to support the Organization's efforts in those areas.

44. **Ms. Hall** (United States of America) said that organized crime, including international drug cartels, was becoming an increasingly serious international security threat. In several key heroin-producing countries, the drug trade was a vital source of national income, which drug lords were using to become the leading investors in the national economy.

45. Her country had taken many steps under a presidential anti-crime initiative and had sharply reduced the number of its citizens who used illegal drugs. Bilateral cooperation had produced results unimaginable even a few years earlier. Several Governments were targetting the highest-level traffickers, who had been personally responsible for staggering levels of drug-related corruption and violence in their countries. More countries were actively engaged in eradication programmes in order to comply with the United Nations drug conventions; and many countries had begun implementing money-laundering laws.

46. Under the leadership of the Executive Director of the new United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, there were great possibilities for consolidating previous gains by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and strengthening the anti-crime role of the United Nations. Her Government supported the Secretary-General's efforts to improve United Nations machinery to fight crime and drugs and looked forward to working with the new Executive Director.

47. The three United Nations conventions on drugs must be the basis for developing anti-drug cooperation. The preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on narcotic drugs had focused on the implementation of those conventions. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had identified the necessary areas of implementation. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had also played an important role in defining international policy in 1997, and she urged support for the adoption in their current form of the five draft resolutions put forward by it. While corruption and bribery were likely to remain enduring challenges, they were not insurmountable problems. The draft resolutions on those topics outlined key actions that Member States could take to stop corruption in international commercial transactions.

48. Urgent measures were necessary to change the political, economic and social environment that allowed international crime to flourish. Governments would have to take some uncomfortable political and economic decisions to halt corruption. The international community had the ability to deny criminals what they desired most—a secure operating environment, access to the illegitimate economy and banking sector, and the ability to travel freely. Progress in those areas could weaken the hold of international criminals.

49. **Mr. Dlamini** (Swaziland), speaking on behalf of the 14 member countries of the Southern African Development

Community (SADC) on agenda item 103, said that United Nations statistics showed rising levels of crime throughout the world. Governments were forced to divert much needed resources to crime prevention and law enforcement. The problem of crime at the national level was exacerbated by the phenomenon of organized transnational crime, which could be tackled only through international cooperation. He therefore urged all Member States to strengthen their efforts to implement the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime. There was a clear need for an international convention against organized transnational crime, and he fully supported the decision of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its sixth session to establish an intergovernmental group of experts for the purpose of elaborating a preliminary draft.

50. The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) described in document A/52/327, was a unique mechanism for the promotion of regional cooperation. It was therefore regrettable that, despite repeated appeals, notably in General Assembly resolution 51/61, the Institute still lacked the necessary resources to fulfil its role. He urged those African countries which had not already done so to accede to the statute of the Institute, since their financial contributions, in addition to increased donor contributions and United Nations grants, would greatly enhance its operational capacity.

51. There had been a number of joint initiatives in the fields of crime prevention and criminal justice in the southern African subregion. In February 1997, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO) had met in Gaborone, Botswana, to consider reports by its legal and training subcommittees on such matters as the harmonization of legislation; extradition; and transnational crime. It had also set up a committee to promote judicial cooperation against money-laundering. In October, the SADC countries, meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, had signed an agreement on cooperation measures aimed at combating crime and contributing to peace, security and prosperity in the region including the regular exchange of information; the conducting of joint operations; enhanced crime prevention in border areas; and technical assistance. In November, a regional workshop on firearm regulation would be held in Arusha, Tanzania.

52. He was encouraged by the efforts over the past year to strengthen the operational capacity of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, although much remained to be done. He therefore called on donor countries and funding agencies to increase their contributions to the Programme. Many developing countries still lacked the resources to respond adequately to the problem of crime and relied upon technical assistance from the Programme. The establishment of an informal consultative group to focus on resource mobilization was a positive step.

53. He looked forward to the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in the year 2000, which would provide an important opportunity for high-level dialogue and the mobilization of public opinion.

54. The SADC countries supported the establishment by the Secretary-General of the new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. Subject to the provision of adequate resources, such an initiative would greatly enhance the Organization's capacity to address the interrelated issues of drug control and transnational crime.

55. **Mr. Saguier Caballero** (Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group on agenda item 104, said that the growth of the demand for illicit drugs and of their manufacture and trafficking, despite the best efforts of the international community, was a cause for deep concern. Those phenomena, which respected no borders, could be tackled only through determined action by the whole international community.

56. The members of the Rio Group viewed the special session of the General Assembly on narcotic drugs to be held in 1998 as an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation in the war against drugs, and fully supported the objectives of the special session as outlined in General Assembly resolution 51/64. They had established a working group to ensure that the Rio Group would make a constructive contribution to the special session. He drew attention, in that regard, to the anti-drug strategy signed in Montevideo, Uruguay, under the auspices of the Organization of American States. That document, which set out the views of the countries of the American continent on drug control, would be an important reference during discussion at the special session. The members of the Rio Group stood ready to work with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the preparatory body for the session, to ensure that the agenda would constitute a realistic and useful basis for the work of the special session.

57. An integrated approach to the problem of illicit drugs must include demand reduction measures. He therefore commended the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in preparing the draft declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction, to be adopted at the special session. The control of chemical precursors and stimulants was a

prerequisite for demand reduction, although he opposed restrictions on the international trade of those substances. The working paper circulated by Mexico contained a number of useful proposals on the matter.

58. Greater attention must be focused on the increase in manufacture and consumption of synthetic drugs. The most effective means of curbing the emergence of such drugs would be the imposition of tighter international controls on substances which could be used for their manufacture.

59. The members of the Rio Group had made considerable progress in the fight against money-laundering. They had adopted a declaration at Buenos Aires which contained measures to strengthen regional cooperation. Given the complexity and scale of the problem, the Rio Group believed that a wide-ranging and ambitious international agreement was needed to combat it.

60. The special session of the General Assembly must consider the issue of alternative-development programmes. Such programmes were needed in order to guarantee a sustainable livelihood for communities involved in illicit cultivation, while preserving natural resources and respecting the environment. There was an urgent need for increased resources to finance the programmes.

61. The members of the Rio Group also supported greater judicial cooperation and had compiled a list of topics which they believed should be included in the agenda for the special session.

62. **Mr. Nuanthasing** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on item 104, said that the growing problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking presented a grave threat to society and development, which could be addressed only through concerted action by the international community. He therefore welcomed the efforts of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to enhance international cooperation, and the adoption by the General Assembly of the Global Programme of Action. His Government also supported the convening of the special session of the General Assembly on international drug control.

63. The Lao People's Democratic Republic recognized its responsibility, as a producer country, to tackle the problem of opium-poppy cultivation. His Government had set an ambitious target of halving opium-poppy cultivation by the year 2000 and sought ultimately to eradicate it. It had adopted a drug-control master plan for the period 1994-2000, the key objectives being the prevention of drug abuse; the elimination of illicit trafficking; and the development of international cooperation. Some 16 projects were to be implemented within the framework of the master plan, although four still required finance from donors. His Government had also strengthened the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and expanded the country's network of customs offices. Lao legislation had been amended to introduce harsh new penalties for habitual producers, traffickers and suppliers of heroin.

64. Substantial progress had been made in the seizure of illicit drugs and the arrest of traffickers and suppliers, but much remained to be done. His Government would continue to strengthen its drug-control measures and to participate in subregional, regional and international cooperation. He hoped that the international community would provide the Lao People's Democratic Republic with the support it required if its efforts were to be effective.

65. **Mr. Amatya** (Nepal) said it was a cause for deep concern that the current financial difficulties of the United Nations had been allowed to erode the operational capacity of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, despite the international community's fervent desire to combat the evils of crime and drug abuse and its awareness of the terrible consequences of inaction. He urged all Member States — particularly the donor countries — and funding agencies to contribute to the Programme, with a view to restoring and strengthening its operational capacity. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's establishment of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention which would boost international efforts to combat crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

66. Nepal was committed to the prevention of all crimes, particularly organized transnational crime. Terrorism was a threat to domestic and international peace and security.

67. The Constitution of Nepal contained necessary safeguards to promote the growth of a multi-party democratic system with full guarantee for the enjoyment of human rights and the functioning of an independent judiciary.

68. His delegation looked forward to the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in the year 2000. It believed that discussion of the computerization of criminal-justice operations, the development, analysis and use of information, and the use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice would yield a desirable outcome.

69. His delegation welcomed the role played by non-governmental organizations and civil society in the activities of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse 1991-

2000. It also held the view that elimination of the demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances was as important as eradication of their illicit production and trafficking.

70. **Ms. Saiga** (Japan) noted with satisfaction that the Division for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had implemented an international study on firearm regulation. All Member States would be well advised to make good use of the report, which described the levels of firearms-related harm and national and international efforts to reduce it.

71. Her delegation highly appreciated the increase in the technical cooperation and advisory services provided under the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme in developing countries, countries with economies in transition, and those in a post-conflict situation. To improve the effectiveness of those services, cooperation and coordination between the Division and other United Nations bodies should be enhanced. Her Government would continue to provide financial support to the Programme and urged the Division to prioritize its activities in view of the difficulty of obtaining increased resources to strengthen the Programme.

72. Drug abuse and illicit trafficking were becoming increasingly serious. Unless progress was made in demand reduction, any effort to eliminate drug abuse would only produce new loopholes in existing legal systems. Raising public awareness, particularly among youth, was of vital importance in preventing the social and economic damage that resulted.

73. Concerted efforts by the international community were necessary in order to sever the link between poverty and the illicit production of narcotic drugs. Japan supported alternative-development programmes in Asia and Latin America and, in that connection, she drew attention to the UNDCP alternative-development programme in Myanmar. Japan commended the Programme very highly for the vitally important work that it had been carrying out, including pro-active research and technical development efforts. Her country had assisted UNDCP in such areas with funds and staff, and hoped that the Programme would further promote those worthy projects.

74. Japan had continued to make substantial contributions to the Programme's Fund since its inception. At the same time, it was essential for UNDCP to continue its efforts to diversify its sources of income and establish a stable financial base in order to put an end to its dependence on voluntary contributions from a limited number of donors. She urged all Member States to provide the Programme with greater financial support, particularly general-purpose contributions, to enable it to serve as a centre of expertise and respond quickly to urgent issues.

75. The Government of Japan attached great importance to the special session of the General Assembly on narcotic drugs and, as a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, was fully committed to the preparatory process and would do its utmost to ensure the success of the special session.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.